Page 4, delete the whole paragraph staring in line 3 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

--Fig. 1 shows a prospective ~~few~~ view of a tape rule assembly constructed according to the principles of the present invention;--

Pages ~~11~~-12, delete the whole paragraph starting in line 32 on page 11 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

--Typical springs used with prior art one-inch blades have a width that is less than the width of the blade, usually in the range of 0.8 to 0.89 inch. Fig. 9 shows a typical value of 0.875-inch for the spring width for all three embodiments of the one-inch blades described in the figure. Prior art spring thickness ranges from 0.0051 to about 0.0060 inch. Generally, prior art spring thickness is approximately 0.0003-0.0006 greater than the blade thickness. Thus, prior art construction uses springs that are thicker and significantly narrower than the blade. It can be appreciated that although it is possible to use this prior art construction and the present invention, it is undesirable because the relatively thick spring of the prior art would result in a housing assembly footprint that is too large to fit comfortably within the average user's hand. Thus there is a need for a new spring construction that can be used with the blade 16 that will allow the footprint of the housing assembly to be made small to be comfortably grippable using one hand.--

Page 19, delete the whole paragraph starting in line 11 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

--It can be understood that the use of the holding member 126 when a measurement is being taken is optional. When taking a measurement, the user typically holds the housing assembly 12 in one hand and manually pulls the blade 16 out of the housing assembly 12 with the other hand. When a sufficient length of blade 16 has been withdrawn from the housing assembly 12, the user can lock the blade 16 with respect to the housing assembly 12 using the holding member 126 to prevent the blade 16 from retracting back into the housing assembly 12 (under the spring force of spring 32) when the user releases the blade ~~12~~ 16. When the measurement has been taken, the user simply releases the holding member 126 from holding engagement with the blade 16 by moving the free end 128 thereof out of wedging engagement with the blade 16 in the manner described above. If the holding member 126 is not used during the taking of a measurement, the user can simply hold the blade 16 with his other hand while the measurement is being taken or, alternatively, the hook member 34 can be placed in hooking engagement with the workpiece to hold the blade 16 outwardly of the housing assembly 12 in a controlled and steady manner against the spring force of spring 32 while the measurement is being taken.

When the blade ~~12~~ 16 is released after taking the measurement, the spring 32 rotates the reel 14 with respect to the housing assembly 12 in a blade-winding direction to wind the blade ~~12~~ 16 around the reel 14. A relatively short free end portion of the blade 16 has a clear film 158 of plastic material adhered to the concave side thereof (FIG. 11) to protect the blade ~~12~~ 16 while the same is out of the housing assembly 12 and while the blade ~~12~~ 16 is being retracted under the

spring force of the spring 32 back into the housing assembly 12. Preferably the film is made of polyurethane and is adhered to the blade by an acrylic adhesive. It is also contemplated to use Mylar® and Nylon® to construct the film. Preferably the film has a thickness dimension within the range of approximately 0.006 inches to approximately 0.014 inches. It is within the scope of the invention to apply this film to the blade of any known tape rule assembly.--

Page 24 delete the whole paragraph staring in line 9 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

--It can be appreciated from FIG. 4 that in the exemplary embodiment of the tape assembly 10, the interior free end 128 of the holding member 126 is disposed generally above the mounting portion 150 of the hook member 34 when the hook member 34 is at the opening 22. The recess 129 is provided in the free end 128 of the holding member 126 so that if the hook member 34 is caused to move upwardly in the opening 22 because of an impact, the free end 128 of the holding member 126 does not prevent upward movement of the hook member 34 in the opening 22 so that the bottom edge 177 can move upwardly to a position flush with exterior housing assembly 12 bottom end surface 170. More particularly, the central recess 129 is of a width to operatively accommodate the width of the hook member mounting portion 150. Therefore when the hook member 34 is forced upwardly in housing opening 22 by an impact, the mounting portion 150 moves upwardly into the recess 129, thereby allowing the bottom edge 177 of the hook member 34 to move upwardly sufficiently so that it is flush with the bottom end surface 170 of the housing assembly adjacent the opening 22. If the recess 129 were not provided, the free end 128 of the holding member 126 could possibly restrict the upward movement of the mounting portion 150 so that an impact on the hook portion 152 of the holding

member 34 could bend of the hook member 34 against the holding member 126. The recess 129 precludes the possibility of this type of damage to the hook member 34 by allowing the holding member ~~34~~ 126 to move upwardly in the housing assembly opening 22 at least far enough to allow the bottom edge 177 to move flush with the surface 170 at the bottom end of the housing assembly 12.--